

## 1970's Boom and Bust of Rock Springs

*Joseph Lee Cantrell*



- **Occupation:** Bureau of Land Management
- **Born:** December 9, 1956
- **Interviewer:** Mark Junge
- **Interview date:** 2/3/2013
- **Topic:** 1970's Boom and Bust of Rock Springs, Wyoming, his father – Ed Cantrell
- **Place of interview:** Rock Springs, Wyoming
- **Source recording for transcription:** MP3 recording by Mark Junge
- **Produced by the Wyoming State Archives/Wyoming's Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources**
- **Funding Provided by the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund**

**Transcriber's notes: I have added some reference footnotes to this transcript where I thought appropriate. In most cases I have deleted redundant ands, ers, uhs, buts, false starts, etc.**

**MARK JUNGE:** Today is 3 February 2013. My name is **MARK JUNGE** and I'm in my room here at the Outlaw Inn in Rock Springs, room 348. I'm talking with **JOE CANTRELL** and today Joe and I are going to talk about a little bit about his life, a little bit about his father and the Rock Springs boom of the 1970s, his impressions as a kid growing up. But I would like to start out Joe with some basic information like what is your full name and where and when were you born?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Okay, my full name is Joseph Lee Cantrell. I was born in Indianapolis, Indiana December 9, 1956. We moved to Wyoming 18 months later which would've been 1958.

**MARK JUNGE:** Why Indianapolis?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Both of my parents were born and raised in Indiana and that's where they were living at the time. I have three siblings and all four of us were born in Indiana.

**MARK JUNGE:** How did you fit in in the birth order?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I am third. I have an older sister and an older brother who is deceased, myself and the younger sister.

**MARK JUNGE:** Although we went over this at breakfast this morning, where is everybody now? You have an older brother who is deceased...

**JOE CANTRELL:** My older brother is deceased and he is buried in Rock Springs. Both of my sisters live in Rock Springs.

**MARK JUNGE:** Okay what are their names?

**JOE CANTRELL:** My oldest sister's name is Nancy O'Connor and my younger sister's name is Peggy Cantrell.

**MARK JUNGE:** And, your older brother?

**JOE CANTRELL:** My older brother was Samuel Edward Cantrell.

**MARK JUNGE:** Okay so his middle name was the same name as your dad.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes and my middle name is my dad's middle name. His name was Edward Lee Cantrell, and I am Joseph Lee.

Ed Cantrell (December 21, 1927 – June 11, 2004) was the public safety director of Rock Springs, Wyoming who was acquitted of killing one of his officers in 1978. Source - Wikipedia

**MARK JUNGE:** Do remember the birth dates of your parents?

**JOE CANTRELL:** My dad was born December 21, 1927 and my mom was born December 15, 1927.

**MARK JUNGE:** So your dad was Edward Lee and what was your mother's name?

**JOE CANTRELL:** My mother's name was Norma Louise Gleeson --that was her maiden name.

**MARK JUNGE:** How did they meet?

**JOE CANTRELL:** At the time they met he was with the Indiana State police and she lived in a small town outside of Muncie, Indiana called Portland. My dad was on the state police at that time and after returning from World War II and the Korean conflict, he was stationed at a state police post there. I'm not sure of the name -- Putnamville, I think, but I'm not sure. That's where they met somehow.

**MARK JUNGE:** They never told you how?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not really (laughs).

**MARK JUNGE:** What did your dad do in World War II?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He was an MP in the military. He was stationed in Germany for three years during World War II. That's where, I think, he discovered a love for law enforcement. They worked closely with the German version of the military police and learned a lot from them. As I recall, he was about ready to be discharged but then they called him back up for another year because of the Korean conflict. And so he was held another year but he spent three years in Germany... the last year I'm not sure where. I think in the United States here somewhere at a base. I don't think he was actually in Korea but I'm not positive.

**MARK JUNGE:** Joe, did he ever tell you about his wartime experiences?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, he talked some about them...the experiences they would have in conflict as military police, working with the Germans... he had a lot of respect for the German police and the German people at the time. He just told some specific stories about some big bar fights that they would break up and the German military police--the respect that they commanded whenever they would walk into a place. They would to slap their holster and everybody would just hit the deck.

**MARK JUNGE:** Can you tell any specific stories he told you?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't recall anything very specific but that sticks out in my mind. He was talking about that one time, the kind of respect that they commanded and how they handled situations. I think that's probably where he started learning how to handle situations and certain police tactics.

**MARK JUNGE:** Was he ever in combat action?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. I don't ever recall him talking about being on the front line or anything. He was there toward the end of the war. I think the last three years of World War II. He talked about the devastation around Germany and the resilience of those people so I don't know if he actually saw any front-line combat or not. He was a guy that... although we talked a lot and there's a lot of things he shared with me there were probably a lot of things he didn't share with me. My dad was a really good athlete and he actually went to Indiana State on a football scholarship before he went into the military but he also had a lot of love for sports and he wanted to coach. I think that was his first love until he went to the military. And, he was a really good baseball player. He played semi-pro baseball at the age of 14 back in Indiana. He was on some baseball team in Europe and they played in that large... where they had the Olympics I believe, in Munich. I don't know if it was a U.S. team playing some German team but he was a pitcher. He just wasn't a guy who would brag although he was good at a lot of things. He was not a braggart about them.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you think, if the time they been right, he would've been a professional athlete?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah I think so. In those days, his real love was baseball. That's what he liked and he was a pitcher. But he also played football and basketball and all of the other conventional sports in those days... football, basketball, track and baseball.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did he pass the love of sports on to you guys?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. He did. My oldest brother actually went to Chadron State College on a baseball scholarship out of high school then played one year over there but had a love of baseball. He played American Legion baseball in Cody and Douglas. I played football and baseball and all those things when I was younger and then when I got into high school, I had more of an ability for wrestling so I ended up being a wrestler in high school and focused on that and didn't play the other sports. I guess in junior high I played football and basketball and ran track but as I got into high school I just focused on the wrestling side of it.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you dad encourage you to go into "ball" because I understand because he uses the balls... football, basketball, baseball but you were a wrestler. That's different.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes but he also loved boxing and he was a black belt in kenpo karate. He used to teach my brother and me when we were kids. We worked out with him. He would train us in karate which I guess I've never followed in my adult career. When I got into wrestling I focused more on the wrestling and weightlifting and those kinds of things. He didn't push things on us. He allowed us to do the things that we like to do. Obviously, we all liked sports but that's what I was better at and so I focused on it and he liked it. He liked to come and watch the wrestling because it's similar to boxing in a way.

**MARK JUNGE:** Wouldn't karate have helped you in terms of balance when you were wrestling and learn how to knock people off-balance when you were wrestling and swing them...?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes, I think there was a correlation between karate training and wrestling. They are different sports they both interrelate, I think. Like I say, when I was in high school I tended to focus more

on the wrestling. I received a wrestling scholarship to Northwest Community College in Powell two years after I graduated from high school. So I went up there for one year on a wrestling scholarship so I pursued that. And then that summer was when the shooting happened with my dad and so I sat out a year... for several years after that to help my family.

**MARK JUNG:** Now I think not all seven community colleges had wrestling.

**JOE CANTRELL:** No... Powell was the only one that had a wrestling program at the time and they also had a new coach who came from Lander. His name was Skip McCreary. He had coached Lander high school and remembered me from high school. I'd met him at a tournament in Green River two years after I graduated from high school so he offered me to come up there and talk to him. A couple of the guys up there, we wrestled on the mat a little bit and after that he offered me a scholarship to come up that year so I did.

**MARK JUNG:** Didn't you tell me at breakfast that you wrestled in Lusk?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I wrestled in high school. We moved to Lusk, Wyoming when I was a sophomore in high school so I wrestled my high school career... my sophomore junior and senior year for Niobrara County high school in Lusk.

**MARK JUNG:** Then what caused you to move?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Uh, my oldest brother was killed... hit head-on by a drunk driver the year after I graduated from high school and we had him buried in Rock Springs. A few months after that, we all moved back. My dad was offered a position here with the Sheriff's Department. We moved back to Rock Springs and I've been here ever since.

**MARK JUNG:** How did you get to Cody though?

**JOE CANTRELL:** My dad was on the Highway Patrol. When we came to Wyoming, my dad had a love of hunting... guns and hunting. He met a guy when he was on the Indiana state police from Wyoming--his name was Lloyd Tillett. Tillett's have a ranch outside of Lovell, Wyoming and he offered him to come out on a hunting trip so he came out on a hunting trip. He met the local sheriff up there. I think his name was Val Brinkerhoff and he offered him a position. So a year later, I think I was 18 months old we moved to Lovell, Wyoming and my dad was on the Sheriff's Department. That's how we got to Wyoming... my dad just had a love of the outdoors and the love of shooting, hunting and fishing.

**MARK JUNG:** Tell me about that... that love of hunting and guns and so forth. Did he ever tell you when he first became interested?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He learned his love of guns and all that from his grandfather. He was very close to his grandfather who was a Cantrell. There were several brothers that were originally from Tennessee and later migrated up to Indiana and lived in a little cabin on a one-acre plot south of Bloomington...a little place called Clear Creek, Indiana. My dad would go out there with him. He told me a story once when he was five years old... I think they were going on squirrel hunting back there and he was holding the rifle

walking behind his grandfather. Granddad turned around and of course the rifle was pointing at him. He didn't really backhand him but disciplined him as far as the... to teach him... so he started learning about gun safety. He was very conscious about gun safety and instilled that all the time in handling guns. That's where he learned his love of guns and hunting was from his grandfather.

**MARK JUNG**E: Well, what about his dad?

**JOE CANTRELL**: His dad, I don't think was a real big hunter. He was more of a fisherman and was a Nazarene preacher so they moved around Indiana a little bit. My dad went to high school in Plainfield which is a suburb of Indianapolis. I think he excelled in athletics and then went Indiana State University on a scholarship. He has an older sister... my aunt Betty, who is still living. Her husband was a friend of my dad's and that's how they had met. He was a baseball player too. They both went... I think after Indiana State... another college to play baseball and that's when my dad joined the military. I think he went to three years of college and then join the military.

**MARK JUNG**E: Why did he say why he quit the program early? He was three years into the program.

**JOE CANTRELL**: He was just restless I think. He was an action-oriented type of guy and he needed to be in the action. I think in those days with World War II going on and all that he just got caught up in the action and wanted to go. He wanted to join and go fight.

**MARK JUNG**E: Was he on a baseball or football scholarship?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Football at Indiana State.

**MARK JUNG**E: He was an all-around athlete.

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yeah. He was very athletic and he was thin-built but muscular. Very quick reflexed. Very powerful. He could generate a lot of power like in karate that was deceptive from his size.

**MARK JUNG**E: How tall was he?

**JOE CANTRELL**: He was 5'10".

**MARK JUNG**E: And you are what?

**JOE CANTRELL**: I am 5'6".

**MARK JUNG**E: He was 5'10" and about how much?

**JOE CANTRELL**: He was probably about 155 pounds, 160 of the most.

**MARK JUNG**E: Is that all?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yeah. He was thin-built but muscular for that size. And powerful. Very quick.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did he pass on his love of athletics and his love of physical action to you guys... to his sons?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I think so. I've always loved those things and been athletic. Even after the year I wrestled through college I have always been active... skiing, mountain biking and running. I liked a lot of outdoor activities, events, competition.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you still?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I've kind of let myself go a little bit here lately but I still like to stay active. I still ski...not as much as I'd like to. I have a buddy who has a lot of similar interests so we would work out together as far as lifting weights.

**MARK JUNGE:** What about your sisters now? Did they follow suit? I take it now that he dwelt more on the boys than your sisters.

**JOE CANTRELL:** I wouldn't say he dwelled on it but obviously the boys played sports and my sisters didn't play sports which when they were growing up. It probably was not as prevalent for girls as it is today

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, that's what I meant -- that it wasn't as prevalent for girls as boys. It wasn't expected of them.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right. Right.

**MARK JUNGE:** Tell me a little bit about your mom. ..where she came from and what she was like as a person.

**JOE CANTRELL:** My mom grew up on a farm in Indiana. My mom is probably one of the nicest ladies that I've ever known in my life. She's a very kind person. She has been a wonderful mom. She grew up on a farm in Indiana outside of Portland. I think she had three brothers and a sister. Her dad was very active in the local community. She was very active but went to a small school and was very active in church and school. She played piano and was in the high school band but didn't want to go to college right after high school...she wanted to work. So she went to work for a manufacturing firm outside of Muncie, Indiana. She was very good at what she does. She became a secretary to the president of the company within a couple of years at a very young age. She was smart in school. She graduated high school at the age of 16. She leapfrogged through a couple of grades during grade school. So she got out of high school at 16 and just wanted to go to work. She grew up with those rural values of farming and hard work. She helped her mom a lot with canning and the things that go along with working on a farm. She helped her dad.

**MARK JUNGE:** So then she went to work right after high school?

**JOE CANTRELL:** She went to work right after high school in Muncie, Indiana. And then I think she and her younger brother had an apartment together and that's right when I think when she met my dad.

**MARK JUNGE:** What was your ambition? Did she ever tell you what she wanted to be?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. (Laughs) I think she just wanted to go to work. I don't know. She could probably answer that better than I could.

**MARK JUNGE:** How old did you say she was... 84?

**JOE CANTRELL:** She is 85. She is a wonderful lady. I couldn't say enough good things about her, I guess.

**MARK JUNGE:** That's a nice thing to say about your mother.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I have.....a lot of respect.

**MARK JUNGE:** I understand. Yes, I understand. How many brothers and sisters did she have?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, for both my parents I have a lot of respect.

**MARK JUNGE:** Yeah, yeah. Good for you. That's good. When you grew up... Do you need a Kleenex?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No, I'm all right.

**MARK JUNGE:** I respect you for that, man. It's hard. I know it's hard.

**JOE CANTRELL:** I just have a lot of respect for both my parents and the things that they have been through.

**MARK JUNGE:** Oh my goodness. Yeah. Is your mother in good health right now?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, she gets around well. Drives around still down to the store and she loves to cook. That's kind of her passion I guess, if you could say she had a passion. She loves to cook!

**MARK JUNGE:** Now you're living with her, right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah.

**MARK JUNGE:** And she still does most of the cooking right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. (laughs). She gets up in the morning and starts to plan what she's going to make for dinner. It's really what her love is. She just likes it. Of course a lot of the ladies in that era ~~area~~ probably tended to cook a lot and make homemade meals. She is always looking for new recipes and watching the food shows

**MARK JUNGE:** So she stays away from the computer I take it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** She doesn't work on the computer at all. She's talked about it...that she ought to get one and start to learn it. She should probably. I should probably get her one. She is sharp enough she's very...



**MARK JUNGE:** Did she ever talk about... now she was raised in the depression, right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, they were both born in 1927 so his kids they were growing up during the 30s. As kids they were growing up during the 30s.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did either one of them tell you what it was like to grow up during those days?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No, not specifically. Other than it was hard. They just didn't have a lot of money. My mom, I think she looks back now and realizes they were probably pretty fortunate back then. They had everything that they needed and her father helped other people.

**MARK JUNGE:** As a farmer you mean?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. I mean, they weren't wealthy by any means but they were also not deprived. Of course, you probably didn't know any better at the time.

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, a lot of people felt that way. They felt like, well we lived through the depression but we didn't feel like we were poor.

**JOE CANTRELL:** They've never said... they never talked about it or said to me anyway talking about any sort of hardship other than it was just hard. Everybody was living that way for the most part but they never felt deprived of things. They were able to go to college, have decent clothes and go to events through school and church.

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, your mom didn't go to college right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No she didn't go to college.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did any of her siblings go to college?

**JOE CANTRELL:** A couple of them did... well, they all did except her. Well I'm not sure about her older brother. He died young. He died at 30. He came back from the war, was married and had three young kids boys and had a reaction to penicillin. They couldn't revive him and he died. He was young man so I never knew him. Her younger brother was also in the military. I think he played basketball... played ball down at Butler (Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana). I don't know if he graduated or not but she talks about him playing basketball there.

**MARK JUNGE:** And they have a really good basketball program down there.

**JOE CANTRELL:** They do now (laughs). A lot of those schools back in the Midwest...

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, Indiana is a basketball state.

**JOE CANTRELL:** And her youngest brother, he went to Purdue. Smart guy. He was the valedictorian of his school. He was in ROTC and went to Purdue University. He was an industrial engineer and worked in

the insurance field. He's 69, I believe he recently developed Alzheimer's and so they had to put them in a home to take care of him. He has deteriorated to the point that he seems unhealthy.

**MARK JUNG**E: Do you know him pretty well?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Oh yeah.

**MARK JUNG**E: Did you know your grandparents on both sides pretty well? Did you have a chance to get to meet them all?

**JOE CANTRELL**: I knew them. My mom's parents died when I was in junior high at about age 14 so I didn't know them as I got older... more of a young man. Of course up until that point we would go back there probably annually on vacations. He still had his farm at that time so it was always a lot of fun for us kids to go out there and throw corn at each other and tease the hogs (laughs). My brother and I... all my cousins lived back there so it was a chance for all of us to get together to play in the corn bins... as I recall I think they had a place for the corn...I think you grew corn and then fed corn to the hogs and all that. I didn't know much about it at the time other than we played in there and had corncob fights, throwing them at each other and kind of teasing the big sow pig. Being out there, I remember they had those big fireflies at night so we would always catch those as kids and...

**MARK JUNG**E: Put them in jars?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yes, put them in jars.

**MARK JUNG**E: We did the same thing.

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yes, so a lot of good memories.

**MARK JUNG**E: On the other side of the family, what about those grandparents?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Dad's mom and dad... his dad passed away just before he had gone to trial so his father never got to see him acquitted. His father passed away at the age of 76 and my dad passed away at the age of 76.

**MARK JUNG**E: And your grandmother?

**JOE CANTRELL**: My grandmother lived into her 80s and in her last few years they had her in a nursing home before she passed away back in Indiana. He and his older sister would make arrangements to take care of her.

**MARK JUNG**E: I'm kind of curious, Joe,-- because I have thought about this and I'm just about to turn 70-- as to where the genes come from. Do you think you inherited any of your genes from your grandparents or where does the influence come from? Your physical ability and your mental capacity? Your looks?

**JOE CANTRELL:** (laughs) I guess I've thought about that. I think when I was younger... I'm heavier, I'm shorter. My mom is 5 foot tall so my mom is short. Her brothers were... well her brothers were a little taller than her so they weren't big people so I probably... although my dad's dad was not a big man either. About my size. I'm heavier right now than probably they were but when I was younger and trimmer I was probably built more like my dad's dad or my mom's side of the family. They were both athletic families so I probably inherited whatever athletic ability I have... I don't feel I ever had the same athletic ability that my dad did. My brother was very athletic and built like my dad, about the same size physically. He was fast in track at the time. Obviously you inherit some of those things on both sides but as far as my looks I probably resemble more of my mom's side. When I look at pictures of myself when I was young and pictures of my dad when he was young we look a lot alike. He was thinner and built differently but I would say now I probably resemble my mom's side but there is both there I guess.

**MARK JUNG:** What about your temperament?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I see both of them in me at different times. My dad was the adage of the old "calm, cool and collected" kind of guy. I don't know if I ever saw him what I would call upset. You know as kids all he had to do is raise his voice. You know he had that deep baritone voice that was just scary as a kid if he yelled at you but he never had to, I guess, a whole lot. Of all the things I never saw him go through... lose his cool, you know. He had a good sense about him and that's what I miss talking with him is his advice. I would always go to him for advice. He always seemed to have the right thing to say for that situation.

**MARK JUNG:** Really? Can you think of any examples?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know (laughs). I remember when I started my job that I'm currently in now. I'm a civil engineer for the BLM and that's what my degree is in -- civil engineering with the construction option. You know there are a lot of things I didn't like about it the first year and a lot of times I would probably come home talk to him about it. Of course he had lived life and saw and he could see how things develop and the advice of working through some of those things and putting things in the right perspective.

**MARK JUNG:** Did he tell you not to worry about things?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes, to some degree. I know he was very proud of me for going to the University of Wyoming, getting a degree and having the job that I had. I enjoyed it because I was able to get out in the field a lot doing project development, a lot of water development projects for livestock and wildlife and so I like the agricultural side of it better than the oil and gas side of things although we got involved in that. In my early career I was able to develop what they called range improvement projects for livestock and wildlife development and I enjoyed that because I was out in the country.

**MARK JUNG:** And here I told you at breakfast that the state wasn't just cowboys (laughs).

**JOE CANTRELL:** (laughs) It's not just cowboys. Particularly this part of Wyoming is the major industrial influence of Wyoming--Southwest Wyoming with the major oil and gas and the trona mines. There's just a major industrial influence in this part of Wyoming that helps generate power and sources throughout

this country. Plus the agricultural side of it. The history of Wyoming has a bigger agricultural side to it is how I associate it but they both play big influences in the state.

**MARK JUNGE:** When you talk about your dad... I think about my dad and what he would say to me in certain instances. Do you still go back and think about what he would say to you in a given situation?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think about **him** it every day. I think about a situation that I'm in and what would my dad say. What would he want me to do? Always. There are just so many times that I wish he was just here to talk to.

**MARK JUNGE:** But you can just hear him... what he would say.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I know there are things he would tell me. He and my brother both buried here in Rock Springs so I visit there gravesites on occasion.

**MARK JUNGE:** I have done that with my dad to and talk to him. I think it's necessary, don't you?

**JOE CANTRELL:** To me it is. Everybody reacts differently. It seems maybe goofy to some people but it gives me some form of comfort. But I think of them every day. There's things that you go through, situations that you're in, decisions that you've got to make... the thing that, I guess with my dad that I would want people to know is that he was a very honest man and instilled that in us. And you can never usually go wrong if you just stick with the truth and be honest and upfront about things. So I guess that always sticks with me but I guess there's always things that you encounter if not daily **then** ~~than~~ weekly. I wonder how he would deal with it or what advice he would give me. But I can hear him telling me things (laughs).

**MARK JUNGE:** I know my dad would say. He would say, "Just concentrate..." I was ADD. "Just concentrate on what you're doing. Just concentrate on what you're doing!" Or if somebody was bugging me or I didn't like something he would say, "Don't worry about that guy. It's nothing to worry about." And I can just hear him today.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right. Yes, there are things that just aren't worth worrying about and you've got to choose your battles to fight because most things just aren't really worth worrying about to maintain your self-respect and he was a man that would not tolerate any... I guess I could say bullshit at all. He knew exactly who he was and what he stood for and what he would and would not tolerate.

**MARK JUNGE:** Can you give me an example of that?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Probably many...

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, I'm thinking in terms of the turmoil that he went through in the 70s. How did he react as an individual? I mean that was a tough time!

**JOE CANTRELL:** It was a very , very, very tough time. That's why as I'm older now and can reflect back on... he was 50 years old, I believe, when the shooting happened and all of that. I'm 56 now so I have a

different perspective on it looking backward and the things that he went through in the way he handled it. I don't know that I could do that. I think that was probably instilled in him growing up in the depression and in his discipline and training in athletics and military. He was a very disciplined man. Like I say, if you felt anything inwardly he didn't show them outwardly. He always portrayed that... like he was always just under control.

**MARK JUNGE:** Steely hard. Would that be a proper description?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes.

**MARK JUNGE:** Impervious to being knocked off balance?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. Like I say, he knew exactly the kind of man that he was and exactly what he stood for and he just wouldn't tolerate...

**MARK JUNGE:** Joe, during those times... when was it exactly the shooting happened?

**JOE CANTRELL:** July, 1978.

**MARK JUNGE:** It was about half a year past the 60 minutes episode right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes.

**MARK JUNGE:** Okay. Did life change for you at that time?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yes, for my whole family! Life changed for whole family with the death of my brother. Honestly, it was probably the biggest thing that we all went through because we were a close family. It was just devastating to lose him! It affected all of us in different ways and I know it affected him until the day that he died. But the shooting affected us because you just a normal family going along and all of a sudden should probably never even have been in the newspapers that all of a sudden starts take on a life of its own. You know, the publicity behind it...the polarization that was behind it. People that knew him and believed in him. And obviously things again like that... there were people that were either for him or against him. And that just starts to have an impact on your whole family. When that happened... the things that he had to go through at that time... being charged with first-degree murder. They made them go through a mental evaluation at the state hospital. That was devastating for him. They wouldn't even allow him to post bond.

**MARK JUNGE:** Really? I didn't know that.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. And they recognized that he was in the top 10% in intelligence of people in the country and the doctor gave him a clean... "There's nothing wrong with this guy." But it was politically driven, I believe, at the time. It's hard to explain to people about that period of time and the paranoia that was going on after the "60 Minutes" thing had instilled a statewide grand jury to start looking into things... so-called vice and corruption throughout Wyoming, particularly Sweetwater County. So he started to take the brunt for all that...became the scapegoat for a lot of people in that respect and was

forced to go through some pretty terrible things. They did finally allow him to post bond and luckily we had a lot of good friends around us which helped us immensely... financially.

**MARK JUNG:** How much was the bond?

**JOE CANTRELL:** The bond was initially half million dollars but I think they reduced it to something like \$250,000 (\$335,000 according to the Deseret News - Salt Lake City, UT, August 4, 1978. Other articles state as high as \$350,000.) Some friends of his posted bond for him.

**MARK JUNG:** Did Spence<sub>2</sub> help?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He wasn't involved at that point yet... some friends of his here and then the ranchers of Lusk... without their support and help I don't know what would've happened. They were very instrumental in helping him so I have a very strong affinity for Lusk and Niobrara County and the people there as well as a lot of people here. There were a lot of people who helped us. I just can't thank them enough or even know how to. Without their help and support I don't know what would've happened.

**MARK JUNG:** How does a person... you guys were middle-class people. How does a person come up with a quarter of 1 million to a half-million bucks?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, we didn't. Friends did. Friends helped us. That's what I mean. Without their help and support financially in a big way and emotionally too...it was a situation that is took on a life of its own with those people and then when Gerry took the case... it just felt like a huge burden lifted when he took the case because you knew you were in good hands.

**MARK JUNG:** Why did Gerry take the case?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think he believed in it. When he interviewed my dad and he writes in his book "Gunning for Justice" he talks about that where Bob Pfister was a lawyer in Lusk at the time who had talked with Gerry to convince them to talk with my dad. When he agreed to do that I went with my dad up to his ranch... Thunderhead ranch out of Dubois when he initially met with Gerry and **after** ~~when~~ he spent time talking with him he realized that he was innocent and that he wanted to defend him. I mean I can't speak for him but that's how he describes it in his book. He had spent quite a bit of time talking with him and believed in him and knew that there was an injustice being done.

**MARK JUNG:** So it was Pfister that told Gerry...

**JOE CANTRELL:** Pfister convinced Gerry to talk to my dad.

**MARK JUNG:** So he was your attorney before?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I guess you could say that, yes. Bob was representing him.

**MARK JUNG:** So that's the first person your dad would've leaned on before he got involved with Gerry Spence?

2Gerald Leonard "Gerry" Spence (born January 8, 1929) is an American trial lawyer. Gerry Spence is widely recognized as one of the greatest trial lawyers of all time. He is a member of the American Trial Lawyers Hall of Fame. Spence states that he "has never lost a criminal case either as a prosecutor or a defense attorney. He has not lost a civil case since 1969." Spence did lose a criminal case in a bench trial but prevailed on appeal.- Source, Wikipedia

**JOE CANTRELL:** Legally, yeah. And then there was a group of ranchers from Lusk that helped pull all that together. I just can't say enough about the support that they had given us and him at the time.

**MARK JUNG:** You say it is just like it happened yesterday?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes, when we start digging into things from the past that brings out emotions that you sometimes don't expect that are still there and very deep. Even though it's been many years, almost 30 years or 35 years in many ways it feels like it was yesterday.

**MARK JUNG:** Let me ask you this... do you feel like... as a kid or as a young man... in many way, do you feel like this was in unfair burden put on you and your family? Do you ever get that feeling?

**JOE CANTRELL:** At times. At times you wonder why did that happen or why us or why did it go to this level that it did but as you live life... there's nothing fair about life. You just get the cards that you're dealt and you just deal with them. So I've always just believed in meeting things head-on and meeting with adversity and the best way you can and move forward. I think that's how he did it and I look back honestly on that period of time on the struggles that we went through, that he went through, that we went through as a family financially and emotionally. I don't know how we got through it in some ways but when you're going through it you're just in survival mode. You're just doing the best you can do on that particular day and moving forward and getting through it. When many years go by and you have a chance to look back and reflect on it --I don't know if I could do that today. But at the time, you're just living it. You're just surviving.

**MARK JUNG:** I respect you for saying that. It takes a lot of guts to talk to a person about this stuff considering everything that your family went through and I respect you for that.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes, I guess I would like people to understand and appreciate the difficulty of it not only for my dad but also for my family... my mom and the things that she had to go through. Obviously he was the focus of all that but we all were part of living it and the daily struggles that you go through to live and survive and to pay bills and to take care of business and life on a daily basis because they took that away from him. Even when he was released on bond one of the conditions of the bond was he could not come into Sweetwater County which meant that he couldn't come home. It's terrible.

**MARK JUNG:** Why?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. They felt it was for his own safety is what they said because of the so-called pimps that were around. I don't know the real motivation behind it but it was difficult.

**MARK JUNG**E: I can't imagine your dad being afraid of facing anybody.

**JOE CANTRELL**: Well, he's not! He wasn't afraid. He wasn't afraid of anything or anybody. It was a condition put on by the court and I don't know why.

**MARK JUNG**E: What happened? Did he go up to Pinedale?

**JOE CANTRELL**: No, he went to Lusk. The people over there that have helped him gave him a place to stay and some work to do. Then when Gerry took the case he actually stayed up at the Thunderhead quite a bit and helped up there. He actually helped the security up there. At the time Gerry had taken on the Hopkinson case as a special prosecutor. There was a lot of security around the Thunderhead at the time because of that... various law enforcement agencies up there... and my dad was up there and helped...

**MARK JUNG**E: Organize the resistance or the protection?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yes, to some degree. Then he helped on the ranch so we spent a lot of time up there and then they were preparing for the trial.

**MARK JUNG**E: Did you visit with your dad at the time?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Oh yeah. All the time. I would go up... I don't know if I would go up weekly but probably biweekly because I had a job that I had to work but I would go up ~~on~~ by numerous occasions to see him up there.

**MARK JUNG**E: How about Lusk? Did you go over there too?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yeah, we would go to Lusk. I mean I still have close friends over in Lusk today so Lusk feels like home to me. I still have a lot of close friends there.

**MARK JUNG**E: So how long was your dad separated that way... in Lusk and up with the Thunderhead?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Up until the trial. I think it was 18 months was when they finally had the trial so almost 2 years.

**MARK JUNG**E: God! That was tough on the family!

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yes, it was difficult. It's hard to explain to people because we were still a family living every day like everybody else having to work and pay your bills and trying to focus and concentrate. It was difficult.

**MARK JUNG**E: How did your dad hold up?

**JOE CANTRELL**: He held up well. Like I said, I never saw him waver. I know he was worried and concerned about his family that he just really needed to worry about his own situation at the time and we all understood that. But there was not a whole lot that he could do at the time but focus on taking



care of himself and getting prepared for the trial but it was a difficult time obviously for him and for the family as well.

**MARK JUNGE:** And your mother? How did she hold up?

**JOE CANTRELL:** My mom held up. My mom is a very strong woman. She doesn't show a lot of emotion either. She held up well. While I guess we all did...sometimes you wonder looking back. I mean is obviously scars you suffered from that you don't even recognize until years later and there are probably still things that affect how I am today from those years.

**MARK JUNGE:** Really?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think so, yes, in how I view things. Just in how you view certain situations. It opens your eyes to certain things in life, I guess. It can be a tough cruel world out there (laughs). So the thing that we've always done is stick together as a family which I think that any family that encounters hardships... If they stick together that's how they survive it or work through it.

**MARK JUNGE:** Are you closer now as a family after the incident? Are you closer?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Probably. I mean it feels like we've always been the same family but obviously those things bring you closer and tighter together in certain ways.

**MARK JUNGE:** How about now? Are you still close to your sisters?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah. I mean, we see each other if not daily ~~then than~~ weekly. We're all right here so and even if you don't it's just like any family when things come up you are family.

**MARK JUNGE:** Right. And your mother, she's got to be one of the pivotal anchors to the family.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. My mom is here and at holidays and things like that it's really because of your mom you're all gathering around.

**MARK JUNGE:** That's for sure. She's the matriarch. Did you know at the time of the Rosa incident... going up to work with Gerry on this thing... did you know exactly what happened? Obviously you would read the papers, right? Or had you?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah, I had read the papers and I had talked with my dad.

**MARK JUNGE:** I'm interested not too. What did he tell you? Can you say?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He pretty much told me what he told everybody in the trial. You know... it was self-defense. You know Rosa... you know there've been a lot of things written about it and done about it. It's no secret. Rosa was working undercover and became a user himself and became paranoid himself and I think somehow felt that there was a threat there against him that was unwarranted and was going to for whatever reason that evening... was in a state of mind where he was just mad and he was going to

draw on my dad and my dad drew first. So it was really just a matter of simple self-defense is what it came down to.

**MARK JUNG:** Did your dad say how he felt at that moment?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't recall that split moment how he... I know it bothered him obviously. It's just a reaction. He had been in law enforcement over 30 years at that time. He was well trained and well disciplined and I think when those situations come up it's more of a reaction than a thought. You know, he was just reacting and then afterward when you start to think about things so is just a matter probably self survival... self-defense.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you meet Rosa?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Once. I met him briefly.

**MARK JUNG:** What was your impression?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I didn't really have much of one. I just met him real briefly at my dad's office one time. I never had a conversation with him myself. So I really never had much of a chance to form an opinion of him.

**MARK JUNG:** I was amazed at the story in "Gunning for Justice" about your dad. He was... was he a fast draw artist or a quick draw artist?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, he wasn't what I would describe as a fast draw artist or quick draw artist. I mean, he was very proficient with a handgun. He practiced and practiced and practiced his whole career but he wasn't an exhibitionist. It was just something he did for his job. Cause there's a lot of guys that do it out there for exhibition. He wasn't that way. It was a tool for him to use in his profession and he wanted to be as good as he could get with that tool.

**MARK JUNG:** So how did he practice?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He shot a lot. They would go to the range and he would target practice. I remember as little kids when we lived in Cody my friends and I would be reloading shells for him all the time... you know, 38's and 357's. We would be a little production team out there reloading for him and then he shot all the time. Of course then on different law enforcement agencies it probably was required but he did it all the time. He would enter some shooting matches, I think, with different law enforcement agencies. So, he just shot all the time.

**MARK JUNG:** Was he **good** going?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah!

**MARK JUNG:** One of the best do you think?

**JOE CANTRELL:** One of the best, I think. Then he had a friend named Bill Jordan who testified at his trial and has written a couple of books... he was an old border patrolman and was proclaimed the "fastest draw the world." He and my dad were friends and shot together and stuff and he even said at his trial that he thought my dad was "a might bit faster" than him but he (Ed Cantrell) was good. He practiced. I guess I look at him like a professional and he was at the top of his game. He practiced and became as proficient as he could.

**MARK JUNG:** If my dad was in this situation and he did the same thing I would want to know 'how could you do that?' Because he shot him between the eyes, right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right.

**MARK JUNG:** He shot Rosa between the eyes. The guy was in the backseat. He had to turn around and draw and shoot accurately just like that and I would've asked my dad, "How did you do that?"

**JOE CANTRELL:** I didn't have to ask him I guess. I just understood. I mean, growing up with him and seeing how he practiced... it's an instinct. And they demonstrated that at the trial. He actually drew at the trial and when the jury saw him actually draw and how fast that is I think that actually helped them understand how that could happen that quickly. ~~The~~ **That** when you practice and practice and draw it's not about aiming... I mean there is a... you get to a point where it's just an extension of your arm but when you draw and shoot and you're looking where... you become accurate that way.

**MARK JUNG:** You're pointing where you are shooting?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right. I mean he used to say sometimes there's guys that can draw pretty fast but you've got to hit what you're shooting at. Well, you are asking about how... when he shot Rosa how...why I would ask how he did that.

**MARK JUNG:** Now he demonstrated that the courtroom?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He did.

**MARK JUNG:** And Gerry probably wanted him to do that so that people could see just how quick of a reaction time was necessary.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Probably and see how that could happen... how quickly that could happen. And Bill Jordan also gave a demonstration in the courtroom on quick ~~draw drawing~~ so people could see how quickly that could happen because most people's normal reaction time is about .5 seconds for the average human being. Good athletes can do it in maybe .4 seconds, maybe .35 if they're very quick. You can draw and click and pull the trigger and about .2 seconds or .25 so if you draw and shoot you can't react quick enough. Bill Jordan did a demonstration where he had a deputy stand there and the judge... they were blanks... had an empty gun... they were blanks I don't think... cocked and pointing at him. He said, "When you see me draw you pull the trigger." He drew and fired before that deputy could pull the trigger because you can't react quick enough. You wouldn't think that a guy like Jordan was so fast and my dad was the same way. They were so fast and proficient with it. They could draw and shoot in about

.25 seconds in the average reaction time was about .5 seconds. They couldn't react quick enough. They demonstrated it in a courtroom so when people see that, then they believe. They can see how that can happen.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you watch it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah. I was there every day at the trial. My whole family was there every day.

**MARK JUNG:** Was that... I mean apart from the fact that your dad was involved and you were emotionally involved-- was that a fascinating experience for you?

**JOE CANTRELL:** It was a fascinating experience for me as a young man to watch that whole process. I was 21 at the time... to watch Gerry Spence and his team prepare. You're watching the best prepare and go to that trial.

**MARK JUNG:** You know, I had a chance to talk to Judge Rodney Guthrie. I don't know if you remember him -- he was on the Supreme Court and was chief justice for a while. I interviewed him 22 or 23 years ago and we were talking about Gerry Spence and he said something like "he is the most well-prepared lawyer I've ever seen."

**JOE CANTRELL:** That's what I learned watching him is how well prepared they were. I mean, you are watching the best. It's like an Olympic athlete preparing for the event. The preparation that they go through to be ready for that. I think that's one of the key differences in what he does versus probably others.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you witness the preparation too?

**JOE CANTRELL:** From an outside view. I mean, I was not up there a lot but from the times that I was around and my dad would tell me about the way that they were preparing I think one of the keys that made the difference. I guess I can come back to a sports analogy. It's like an Olympic athlete or today playing in the Super Bowl. A lot of people have certain abilities and that are the preparation behind that and the determination that you have that makes the difference.

**MARK JUNG:** How did your dad get along with Gerry?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well.

**MARK JUNG:** Did they see eye to eye?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I think they were like brothers almost. I think they developed a bond and a relationship that was well beyond lawyer/client... they spent a lot of time together. And I feel that connection with Gerry to this day. I have a lot of admiration and respect for him for what they did. Especially more so today--I'm older to appreciate what all they had done. I think ~~the jury~~ **Gerry** would tell you that they had developed a strong bond and relationship.

**MARK JUNG:** They were both tough men.

**JOE CANTRELL:** They were both tough men. They were both at the peak of their professions. They were both tough men. They got along. They got along well. They respected one another.

**MARK JUNG:** Well, there was a whole battery of lawyers wasn't there? I mean, it wasn't just Gerry?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. Right. At the time Eddie Moriarty and Bob Schuster were his partners... they were all instrumental in the trial and were there at the trial plus I don't know who all was behind the scenes that works for them are in the office. I'm sure a multitude of people. In the trial itself it was Gerry and Eddie Moriarty and then Bob Schuster.

**MARK JUNG:** What was Eddie like?

**JOE CANTRELL:** They were all just great guys from my perspective and what I knew of them... obviously both very bright guys, dedicated and determined.

**MARK JUNG:** Gerry talks about him (Eddie) in the book about being such a bulldog.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, like a pit bull that grabs hold of something and doesn't let go until you're ready. There different... different guys obviously. All very smart, determined, tough guys.

**MARK JUNG:** And Bob Schuster?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Bob is the same way. Bob is a great guy. They all still practice. They're not partners anymore but they each have their law firms. Bob is a very bright guy.

**MARK JUNG:** He ran for... what was it? He ran for Congress I think. Might have been against Barbara Cubin...

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think it was.

**MARK JUNG:** Well of your dad was then... I want to say lucky. Yeah, he was lucky to be able to work with that team. Yes the very best!

**JOE CANTRELL:** He had the very best.

**MARK JUNG:** Do you think that was key? Otherwise, do you think things would've developed differently?

**JOE CANTRELL:** It's possible. You know I just think their circumstances surrounding his case that made it different and exceptional ~~for~~ **from** most cases. Part of that may have been Gerry's involvement at that level but it was just one of those cases that just took on a life of its own and became bigger than the parts and the individual pieces to it for whatever reason. And it became a big part of Wyoming's history. It was the largest murder trial in Wyoming's history. It was a very... I guess if you're looking in from the outside-- it was a very controversial case. People were very polarized by it-- either for or against and probably still are to this day. And that's the one thing that I would want people to know that most people who don't know him or his family are probably the people that speak the loudest against my dad.

What I would want people to know is what a fine man that he was and what a great dad that he was. A lot of times in the press you're painted differently than how you truly are a lot of times people take those perceptions and build upon them and build you and do something that you're just not. We do it all the time in society. But he was a wonderful man. A great man and a great dad! And people that knew him and my friends and stuff that grew up around him, they all liked him and appreciated him and talk about him in good ways.

**MARK JUNGE:** You know... when I look at it as an outsider... if an outsider looks at this case, he might say here is an example of a guy who had a problem with the guy in the backseat of the car and the guy in the backseat of the car had a problem with him. And, without seeing anything he whips around and kills this guy—shoots in him between the eyes. If it wasn't for Gerry Spence it seems to me this would be a clear-cut case of murder.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right.

**MARK JUNGE:** See what I'm saying? I mean, I'm not trying to be nasty...

**JOE CANTRELL:** Because that's the perception that you had received from the media and the press and when they presented the facts at the trial, they saw it otherwise. It was a clear-cut case of self-defense. It was the opposite of what you just described. And when the facts presented themselves it made it evident that that's what it was. That's why he was acquitted. They had a very short acquittal. It only took the jury a couple of hours I think to come back with a verdict which in most murder trials is a bad indicator is my understanding. So it was a very quick acquittal. So when they saw the facts it made sense...but he went through trial. But people don't know all the facts and that's the trouble. They run with perception and the media can have big part in how the public sees things so I did learn that...to always be somewhat wary of articles that are written in the media; but sometimes there's a little more to the story than what you're getting and that things can be edited to slant things in a certain direction that they are written to be.

**MARK JUNGE:** When your dad got acquitted, it only took two hours right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think it was a couple of hours is all. It was a short period of time.

**MARK JUNGE:** Were you there? Did you have to leave and then gather again together?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, we left the courtroom. After they had all of the closing arguments and everything then we all left. My family, I think, went to a motel. It was up in Pinedale so they went to a motel. My dad and I were ~~standing~~ staying... a friend of his Duke Early was the game warden at the time... he allowed us to stay at his place. There were just so many different friends that helped us in so many different ways throughout this whole process. One thing I've always wanted to be able to do is to thank all these people in some way... For them to just know how much we appreciated all they did for us. And that's what kind of made it bigger than life too was all the people that were helping and supporting. But yeah, we went there and we were just waiting and resting and you don't know whether that will be an hour or two days.

**MARK JUNG**E: So, you went up to Pinedale?

**JOE CANTRELL**: We were in Pinedale. The trial was in Pinedale. We just left the courthouse to go rest and then they called us back.

**MARK JUNG**E: You were there when they read the verdict. What was going through your mind?

**JOE CANTRELL**: When they read it you mean?

**MARK JUNG**E: Yes.

**JOE CANTRELL**: A sense of relief when they said "not guilty." I think the perception was 'how could they come back with anything other than that'--but you don't know. I mean, you have thoughts that he could go to prison and how would you deal with that? But when they actually read the verdict, it was probably just a big sense of relief. They got it right!

**MARK JUNG**E: Did you break down? Did your mother breakdown?

**JOE CANTRELL**: We didn't break down but the courtroom erupted in applause so they all felt that... you could feel it. I think people felt in there. People felt that he was innocent.

**MARK JUNG**E: There was applause?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yes. As I recall, there was a feeling of relief and happiness and that the right thing was done. It was... hard to explain, I guess.

**MARK JUNG**E: Did you dad ever tell you how he felt?

**JOE CANTRELL**: I think he felt relief.

**MARK JUNG**E: Did you see it in him?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yeah, you could just see... it was over. He wanted to get it over and there were certain strategies throughout the trial they discussed. One of them was him testifying and he was the kind of guy, like I say, he was an action-oriented kind of guy. And he just wanted to get it over with one where the other. Let the chips fall where they may. Let's get it over with. And I think people see that. They see the truth. That's what I say--if you follow the truth, it will always prevail and people sense that. They can sense if you are lying to them or not or trying to deceive them or not. He wasn't. "This is how it happened and how it was. Now you decide and I can live with your decision because I've done everything that I can do and told you the truth." And I think that's how he saw it and how Gerry saw it. And to watch Gerry in a courtroom... he is so eloquent in the way that he describes things. But my dad wanted to testify and they (the jury) needed to hear that from him.

**MARK JUNG**E: Your dad wanted to testify? He told Gerry this?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. They talked about it because the strategy is sometimes that you don't put your client on the stand. But I think that they needed to hear him and when they heard him they obviously believed him. Because that's how he was--he was a straight shooter. He told it just how it was.

**MARK JUNG:** Were you there when your dad testified?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah.

**MARK JUNG:** He was calm and cool just like he was?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. He was obviously nervous in the beginning when he first started. You know, he has that booming voice and he talks real loud and deliberate and so it just echoed throughout the courtroom. And then once he kind of got his rhythm and calmed down he just sat and talked like you and I are talking. Gerry would ask him questions and he would talk and just tell... I'm sure you can get a transcript of the trial and read through all the questions. Basically he just sat and told his story just like you and I are talking.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you get a feeling at the time, Joe that people understood?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. That's what I said. I think everybody felt it. I felt it. Of course, I was his son and I have a different perspective on it but I felt that people were seeing that. I'm thinking, "How could you not see this?" But you don't know how people see it because sometimes you're too close to things and you don't see. I had the perception of the courtroom in the feeling that you don't really know.

**MARK JUNG:** Do you play this thing out in your head very often... the trial?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not really. At the time, obviously, there's a lot of things going through your mind. I just feel that the right thing happened. I don't think that it ever should've gone to trial. I think it was a case that got blown out of proportion in that degree and, like I say, became a life of its own for a lot of things that were going on in the state at the time--the political environment at the time. I felt like he was in some ways a scapegoat--the culmination of all those things.

**MARK JUNG:** Really? Yeah. He was sort of the sacrificial lamb for the Rock Springs debacle?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I sort of feel in some ways. So I feel the right thing was done. The right verdict was given.

**MARK JUNG:** What was your impression of the judge? (Sweetwater County District Judge Kenneth Hamm) How he was thinking or could you see...?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh, I don't know. Yeah, he was I think very strict disciplinary kind of judge, very fair and honest. My dad liked him and respected him and felt that it would be a fair trial with him. You know, it wasn't biased. He just was a guy that enforces the law... the legal system.



**MARK JUNGE:** Now you're his kid... you are Ed Cantrell's kid and you've got a prosecutor (Robert Bath) trying to nail him to the cross, right? How did you feel about that? How did you feel when somebody's trying to make your dad out to be--like you say--something that really wasn't the truth?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, some of that was hard to hear them describe him in a way that I knew was not right. These people are trying to say things about your dad and put him in jail. You know, it's not a positive thing. I don't think but I resented them for it. I understood that they were trying to do their job but I think it was a difficult trial for everybody involved because in many ways a lot of the people knew one another. You know growing up in small communities of Wyoming, I think they knew that he was a fair and honest man. So I think it was difficult for a lot of people in different ways.

**MARK JUNGE:** I want to drop back for a minute to a different point. Let's get away from your dad for a minute. What was it like... you grew up in Rock Springs, right?

**JOE CANTRELL:** For the most part. Like I say, I spent my high school years--most of them in Lusk--Niobrara County. We moved back here... I was 19, I think, when we moved back and my dad became the undersheriff before they asked him to be the director of public safety. It was essentially the police chief. At that time it was over the police and fire department but they called it director of public safety.

**MARK JUNGE:** Oh really? I didn't know that.

**JOE CANTRELL:** They created that position. But he primarily just dealt with the police department side of it.

**MARK JUNGE:** So, you were young man? Did you have a job?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, when we moved back here I worked for Paul Anselmi... he had a car rental and car dealership. I worked for them. I started to go to school up here and was still struggling from my brother's death and I think really couldn't focus as well so I just worked for that year. The second year, like I say, they have the state wrestling tournament in Green River and I went over there and watched and then ran into Skip McCreary was taking over the coaching position at Northwest Community College and he talked to me there. Asked me to come up there so I thought it was a good opportunity for me to go and get out of here for a while. I loved wrestling and had been out of a couple of years and he gave me that opportunity to try it again so I was in Powell in college that year and then came home that summer and then in July is when he shot Rosa. Everything changed after that. I sat out of school until the trial was over with and just worked to help my family.

**MARK JUNGE:** What did you do?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I worked for Paul Anselmi. I worked for them as a car rental representative and at their car dealership detailing cars and partly working at the rental place.

**MARK JUNGE:** You didn't know you were going to be a civil engineer?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. When my brother and I went to Torrington, I studied engineering the first year out of high school at Eastern Wyoming college so I went one year there right out of high school. And then my brother was killed in March. We had him buried here and then we moved back over here in August, I believe it was of that year. Then I sat out that whole next year and just worked so it had one year of college at Eastern Wyoming and then I went to Northwest. I didn't study engineering up there. I just... I don't know why. I think my mind just wasn't into it. Still, honestly, it took me a while to get over my brother's death and to put all that into perspective. He and I were very close. I still feel that there is a piece of me missing because of that. So, I focused more on the wrestling side of it in school. I ended up getting my Associates degree there which I didn't even realize I had enough credits. So I went to the graduation ceremonies. My parents came up and I came back to work ~~that~~ ~~but~~ summer and was planning to go back the following year but then the shooting happened. Then I just sat out and worked

**MARK JUNG:** If you had your Associates, why would you go back?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I wanted to wrestle again. I had one more year of eligibility left of the college level.

**MARK JUNG:** Was wrestling a good out for you? A good release for you?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah.

**MARK JUNG:** Did it make you a better wrestler?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, I'd like to think so. It made me a better... I think more than anything it helped me emotionally. I think when you're working out that hard and it was a pretty good level of competition even at a junior college level... I felt good. I mean, it makes you feel good to work out hard like that and to compete. I felt I had ability that following year to go to nationals so you have a motivation.

**MARK JUNG:** To junior-college or JuCo nationals, you mean?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. We went down to Colby, Kansas that year and I got third in our regional tournament in Colby, Kansas but they only take the top two to nationals so I didn't make it but I felt the following year I could make it to nationals. So I had a motivation... so you have something to motivate yourself to look forward to and to work toward and so I was looking forward to that that following year and then... I just didn't do it. But I felt I had an opportunity to compete against some pretty good kids and it makes you feel good to compete against good people.

**MARK JUNG:** The top echelon of people. Where did you go to school after that?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, I sat out until after the trial and then I went back to the University of Wyoming.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you wrestle there?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I didn't. At that time I was 23 and had been out of it for a couple of years and to compete at that level... looking back it seems like "well, you're only 23" but at those level of sports it can really make a difference in how you can compete. I just didn't. Obviously at the time there was a lot of

emotional stuff trickling over from this whole emotional ordeal. I felt at the time it was probably good for me to get away. I always wanted to get my degree. I always wanted to work toward that but I struggled academically probably for a while there... I was probably just a C student overall.

**MARK JUNG:** Why didn't you just go off the deep end and start drinking and taking drugs and just start going hog wild?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. I thought about that too. I think you either go one direction or the other. I wouldn't let myself. I wanted to show people that we were strong and that we were tough and that we could work through this and persevere through this and that you're not going to beat us down because of that. I wanted to do something positive. I wanted to do something to better myself and I think that's just something inherited from probably both my parents and from my dad. I mean, that's how he survived that. I didn't want to be weak and...

**MARK JUNG:** You didn't want to let them down.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. Yeah, I wanted him to be proud of me and to... plus I wanted to do something to better my life.

**MARK JUNG:** That's interesting because it could've gone either way but the negative part wasn't as attractive to you as the positive part.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right. I've never had those tendencies – – even in high school to drift.

**MARK JUNG:** Oh really? Now, wait a minute Joe. Even in high school you never got into trouble?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, I won't say I never got into trouble but rarely. Like all kids you party a little bit but the people that I hung around with... and my focus in high school was to be a state champion wrestler and I remember that a lot of my thoughts and process were geared toward that. I worked out year-round on my own. In the summer months I would run and lift weights thinking about that next season and wanting to do better; wanting to be a state champion. The way to do that is to work at it. So those were my goals and if you're drinking and drugging it up you can't do that it's counterproductive. That was my focus and that was what motivated me looking back. I never really thought about it at the time. I thought a lot about wanting to become a state champion wrestler. And I think I did okay in school. I think in high school I was probably a B student and on the honor roll. Those are my thoughts and focus then. I had a strong belief in God. I kind of remember that all throughout my life but particularly in times of real need when my brother was killed and through this (the shooting) you know, you have a lot of prayer. We're not what you would call a religious family but I've always had a strong faith a strong belief in...which I think helped pull me through some very hard times.

**MARK JUNG:** What faith are you?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well... I don't really attend a church. We used to go to the First Baptist Church here when we were kids. My mom went to what they called the Church of Christ or Christian church in

Indiana so I guess I would just say I was a Protestant. I'm not really any denomination per se. I don't attend any church on a regular basis... I probably should.

**MARK JUNG:** That's really interesting. So you're not interested in the dogma?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not to me. It's fairly simple. I believe in God. I believe in a higher being and I believe that a lot of that is how we live our lives on a day-to-day basis. You know, try to do that best you can. We're all human beings. We all falter on occasion. That's how I've lived my life. That's why I've always enjoyed the outdoors. It just feels like that's where God is to me--in the outdoors and in the mountains. I feel more at home and more peaceful.

**MARK JUNG:** You would've fit in with the Indians.

**JOE CANTRELL:** (laughs) You know probably a lot of people feel the same way that I do. Rather than an organized church--and I do like that; I feel there's a need for that. I personally I guess never have really attended on a regular basis. I guess, you know, I have a belief in God and I pray on my own terms and I feel that it has driven me and helped me in a lot of ways during some very difficult times to have that faith.

**MARK JUNG:** Especially during that time that your dad went through?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes.

**MARK JUNG:** Were you praying pretty hard then?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah. I sometimes now wish I had kept a daily diary of all of my thoughts and such at the time but I didn't.

**MARK JUNG:** Did anybody?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No.

**MARK JUNG:** Your dad didn't keep a diary? Your mom?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. They weren't that type of people. They were just living. But I remember thinking those things. I guess that's what drove me to stay positive and stay away from drugs and alcohol...**not** to fall into that trap ---it's easy to go down that road. You know, my dad experienced some drinking problems afterward probably to bury some of the pain. I don't know. All my life growing up we never had alcohol in the house.

**MARK JUNG:** Oh really?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. My dad was pretty strict that way. And having my brother killed by a drunk driver, I just had at that time a lot of negative thoughts about alcohol and saw a lot of negative outcomes from alcohol.

**MARK JUNGE:** What about your sisters? Did they go off the deep end because of this upbringing did they maintain an even keel?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, for the most part. My younger sister struggled a little bit with some things but for the most part I think that we all came through it. I won't say unscathed totally.

**MARK JUNGE:** Your dad, he started drinking... did he become an alcoholic?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't think so. I mean, I've never seen my dad drink my whole life until after that so is difficult to see that but I understood what was going on. There was a period of time there were he struggled for a while.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you have talks with him about it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you really? What did you tell him?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well... that I would like him to quit and not see something bad happen to him.

**MARK JUNGE:** What was his reaction?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He understood and listened to me...but I don't know what all he was going through. I know it was difficult. Especially now, the age I am now, looking back you basically have your career ripped out from under you, you basically have these people saying terrible things about you and having this perception of you and yet you still have to go out into society and make a living when people tried to take that away from you. That's kind of when he went back to the range detective work. That fit him well with the solitude. That's what he did afterward.

**MARK JUNGE:** Because he was out of work essentially for two years right? I mean, 18 months is the whole time of the trial

**JOE CANTRELL:** That was the time between the preliminary hearing and the trial... was 18 months. So, it was about a two-year period of time.

**MARK JUNGE:** So how did he get paid?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He didn't.

**MARK JUNGE:** What? Well, who supported the family?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, we all helped. Then like I say, he went to Lusk and those people gave him a place to live and he worked there so he made some money. Then he was up at Thunderhead for a while. Yeah, it was tough

**MARK JUNGE:** How did he ever pay back the bail money?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, you get the bail money back when you go to trial.

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, Joe... have you ever talked like this to anybody?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No.

**MARK JUNGE:** You haven't?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not other than close friends and probably not in this kind of detail. I just don't...

**MARK JUNGE:** Why did you decide to talk to me?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. I think more because of the historical value of it more than anything. You're a Wyoming guy in Wyoming doing this for the State of Wyoming for the historical value... probably that reason more than anything.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you want to set the record straight?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, I don't necessarily want set anything straight other than these are my thoughts. I mean I know the story is my dad and he's gone now so nobody can talk to him anymore and there's been quite a few things done throughout the years that have set the record straight on things. And there's probably a lot of history there that if a person wants to dig it up they can put a lot of things together. I guess more than anything to me that I would like people to know from my side of it is what a good man that he was and that the right thing was done and what a great dad he was. And my family, you know, my mom... you know that we are just a family in Wyoming trying to live. There was in an injustice done here that was set straight because of the trial and that he's not this guy that probably a lot of people have this perception of being. From my perspective as a son I just want people to know what a great dad he was and a good man that he was.

**MARK JUNGE:** Good statement.

**JOE CANTRELL:** This is really being done primarily for the historical value of it rather than the commercialization of it. The thing that I have trouble with sometimes is that people that want to make a living off his misfortune... I have a problem with that. There's been a lot of that through the years and my family has not necessarily profited from any of it. Other people have made... it has distaste to me and there's things that I thought about pursuing myself... things that we could do. Something seems unseemly about trying to make a profit off of other people's misfortune.

**MARK JUNGE:** What have you thought about doing that?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, my dad started to write a book of his own and I was helping him with that before he passed. I've always wanted to finish that because it's really his side, his story although there so much more that could be said... than what we got started with. I have a lot of information that I could dig into. A positive thing that came out of it was that back in the early 80s. Warner Bros. had bought the rights to Gerry's book and Larry McMurtry<sup>3</sup>--the guy that wrote 'Lonesome Dove'--wrote the movie script. He

became friends with my dad and he was here several times and did a lot of research and wrote a script. It was a top-notch level--you know, Warner Bros. and people at the top of their game in Hollywood at the time. It just never got made for different reasons but Larry wrote a script. They will try to resurrect it on occasion but it never got made. But through that process he became friends of Larry McMurtry. One time he was living down in Tucson and I went with them on something. He's from Archer City, Texas so my dad spent some time down there one winter. He invited him down there to spend some to get away from everything. He and Larry got along well and understood one another. And then, when they made 'Lonesome Dove'-- the series 'Lonesome Dove'-- Robert Duvall<sup>4</sup> called my dad and ask him to be his personal consultant which he did. Robert Duvall patterned his look after my dad in 'Lonesome Dove'. They filmed it in Texas and I flew down with my dad to Austin, Texas and met Robert Duvall when they were beginning the series. ~~He~~ We went into that little makeup trailer. There were a couple of little Italian makeup artists in there with Duvall and Duvall told them "I want to look just like that." So they were examining his head and everything. So he patterned his look after my dad in 'Lonesome Dove'. If you watch it now you can see the similarities. My dad was a little bit older and my dad shaped that hat for Duvall—that "Gus" hat, they called it. He picked that out for him and worked for him as his personal consultant on the original 'Lonesome Dove' and then was the movie consultant for the sequel. They made a couple of sequels... 'Streets of Laredo' was the sequel to 'Lonesome Dove' that starred James Garner and then those other kids play Gus and Call at an early age... David Arquette and Johnny ~~Lee~~ Miller and I can't think of that actresses name--she's married to Ben Affleck-- Jennifer Garner. She played in one of those and she was just getting started. And then in the third sequel, he actually had a speaking part in it so we got to be part of those kinds of things and that was different for him.

**MARK JUNG:** Did he mind doing it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No, I think he enjoyed it. What he discovered is he met some really fine people. You hear a lot of stories about Hollywood and the kind of people around it but there's also a lot of very good people around that industry and he got to meet... Duvall was a very fine man and he really liked him. They connected. I think they were not so much different. They thought about making that movie and Duvall wanted to play my dad if they ever made that movie which I think he would have done an excellent job. He became good friends with <sup>3</sup>Wilford Brimley. He's another actor who had a place down in Lehi. He currently lives in Greybull, Wyoming.

**MARK JUNG:** Wilford?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes.

<sup>3</sup>Larry Jeff McMurtry (born June 3, 1936) is an American novelist, essayist, bookseller and screenwriter whose work is predominantly set in either the old West or in contemporary Texas. He is known for his 1975 novel *Terms of Endearment*, his 1985 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Lonesome Dove*, a historical saga that follows ex-Texas Rangers as they drive their cattle from the Rio Grande to a new home in the frontier of Montana, and for co-writing the adapted screenplay for *Brokeback Mountain*. *Lonesome Dove* was adapted into a television miniseries and both the films of *Terms of Endearment* and *Brokeback Mountain* won Academy Awards. Source – Wikipedia

4Robert Selden Duvall (born January 5, 1931) is an American actor and director. He has won an Academy Award, two Emmy Awards, four Golden Globe Awards and a BAFTA over the course of his career.

5A. Wilford Brimley (born September 27, 1934) is an American actor.[2] He has appeared in such films as The China Syndrome, Cocoon, The Thing and The Firm. He had a recurring role on the 1970s television series The Walton's. Brimley has also done television commercials, including advertisements for Quaker Oats and Liberty Medical.

**MARK JUNG:** Lehi where?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Utah. Just south of Salt Lake. He had a ranch down there. In fact I talked to Wilford probably a couple of years ago when the lady called and talked to me about making that movie. The people that I know and trust are the people that my dad knew and trusted. I don't know anything about that industry but I knew those people or had met them with him... people that I feel would have his best interests at heart so I was asking Wilford for his advice on some things. It was never developed which I'm glad because I didn't like the script that she had written.

**MARK JUNG:** You didn't?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not particularly. If it was ever to be made I felt like it should be made by those people--you know with Wilford and Duvall and McMurtry's involvement because they all knew him so they have a perspective of him in that. I don't know that anything will ever be done because there's always been talk about it on occasion but they couldn't get it done for whatever reason.

**MARK JUNG:** You don't know why? Did they run out of money or what? Somebody just didn't like the idea?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know exactly what stopped at the time. You know at that time I think it would've been a great movie or would even be today. I think it's a story that many people can relate to. It has a lot of human elements in it that can affect a lot of people. Even though it's 30 or 35 years old it still kind of a modern-day western. In those days there was talk of trying to get Clint Eastwood to play my dad who I think personifies him--the image that he portrays onscreen in his westerns. His image personifies him but he doesn't look like him and doesn't sound like him. At that time he had just made 'Unforgiven' and McMurtry's agent and his were the same so they were talking to one another about it. But you know, it's just a funny business-- they dump a lot of money into things and it just goes nowhere. They dump a lot of money into that and I don't know what they paid McMurtry... a quarter of \$1 million probably to write the script.

**MARK JUNG:** Would you like to see it done?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I would like to see it done in the right way. I think it would be a good story and...

**MARK JUNG:** Let me ask you this Joe. Would your dad be the hero in this?



**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. To me, he would be. And I think the way Larry wrote it... yeah probably, I guess, if there is a hero in it. He would not be portrayed as the bad guy. It's just an event.

**MARK JUNG:** Do you think that it would be fair to take any of the characteristics that might not be favorable to your dad and incorporate those?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, I think it's real. It's real. Yeah, I think there's parts of the needed to be incorporated to show the true story. I mean, everything's not hunky-dory all the time.

**MARK JUNG:** No.

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think he would've made a great... I mean... A lot of things going on in 80s and then on occasion something comes... I mean, like even you calling me. I mean the reason you're calling me is because of him. It's his story. I'm just a guy who lives in Rock Springs

**MARK JUNG:** Not exactly. Not exactly. Let's get that right because I knew that that is what you would be thinking--that it was just your dad that I would be interested in. And of course I'm interested in your dad. I think your dad is an amazing character in this story. But I also, before we quit, I would also like to get your impression of what was going on around here.

**JOE CANTRELL:** There's a story behind the story and that's what I'm fulfilling so to speak. People know about his story and that's what's been highly publicized--positive or negative. But there's a story behind that that what you are is the set of I guess I represent as his son and his family. I guess it's hard to feel that your bragging on yourself because he was not that way at all. And I'm not but he always thought that he had as much admiration for me as I did for him... because I think he knew the... how hard it was for the... what all of us are going through too... and that hurt him.

**MARK JUNG:** I understand..... you say your dad was writing a book. Was it just about this one incident?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. It was kind of a biographical thing of where and when he was born and raised up through this incident; about guns and shootings and then about this incident. Was a good story, it was a good base. I just wish he could be here to embellish a lot of things. But I feel that I can take that and do that. I mean, there are things that I know. It's not strictly from him or his words at that point. Actually even working with Larry McMurtry on it and he had reviewed it at about that time is with Larry had a heart attack and he had heart surgery and there was about a two or three year period of time where Larry struggled and didn't do anything.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you ever think about.... I mean what's prevented you from just following up on what you dad was trying to do?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know exactly (laughs). With him not here it's just something that he was pursuing. I mean, I obviously was with him every step of the way but with him gone it's just not the same. But I would do it, I guess, for his legacy--something that he would hopefully be proud of. I've always had these mixed feelings, like I say, on pursuing these types of things for commercial gain off of

that... but it's something that he would support the his family could benefit from if it's done the right way. Anything that's done I would want make sure was done out of respect for him--not to demonize him. Other people...I understand it's for the entertainment value but sometimes it gets embellished so much it's not even a real story anymore.

**MARK JUNG**E: How does his story read, in your opinion?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Well, in my opinion, it reads well because it gives a history into him. I enjoy it more for that than anything. It's like if you sat down and wrote your life story. Do you have sons?

**MARK JUNG**E: Yes, two.

**JOE CANTRELL**: They would enjoy reading that about their father.

**MARK JUNG**E: (laughs) I'd like to think they would! I'm not sure they would.

**JOE CANTRELL**: From my perspective I guess I enjoy it.

**MARK JUNG**E: Well Joe, I would encourage you to pursue that.

**JOE CANTRELL**: Yeah, I thought about pursuing it.

**MARK JUNG**E: Have you let anybody read it?

**JOE CANTRELL**: I let a few close friends read it.

**MARK JUNG**E: Okay, well, would you consider letting me read it? It's up to you. You don't have to commit yourself.

**JOE CANTRELL**: (hesitant) ...You know, right now there's only about 100 pages...and I enjoy it. I know there's information that I can put in there along with photographs to make it a nice hard copy book. Even 100 pages is not a bad book. It's not a novel by any means but... something along those lines to get that out.

**MARK JUNG**E: Handwritten pages or typed pages?

**JOE CANTRELL**: Typed.

**MARK JUNG**E: Well, typewritten pages can it be longer than a written page in a book... probably two thirds more, I don't know.

**JOE CANTRELL**: And then there are a lot of photographs that I would try to put in there that I think people would enjoy seeing. To me, the people that would enjoy seeing this -- it could be anybody, but particularly the people in Wyoming but I think it could appeal to a pretty broad audience even people in New York or Chicago or urban environments that enjoy the kind of story.

**MARK JUNGE:** You know what it sounds like? It sounds like you need a real good writer like McMurtry. You need to get somebody that can really write and take that raw material and work with you and get what you want.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, thought about contacting him and seeing if he would be interested in doing that. They were kind of corresponding at the time. He had a heart attack at the time and then I think it was about the time he was working with Diane Ossana<sup>6</sup> on Brokeback Mountain...was during his heart attack.

**MARK JUNGE:** He passed away didn't he?

**JOE CANTRELL:** As far as I know he's still alive.

**MARK JUNGE:** How's he doing?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think he's doing well.

**MARK JUNGE:** Wonder could he still be interested?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. I read an excerpt from... he wrote another book called something like "My Hollywood Memoirs" or something like that. There's a brief section and there were he talks about my dad and thinks of him often and the tragic events in Wyoming. I know they connected.

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, we'll see. Fate might have something in store for you there.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Maybe. My dad always felt that if anything was ever to be done it would be after he died so I guess he's right in that respect.

**MARK JUNGE:** Well, that's the way it is with most people.

**JOE CANTRELL:** They tried hard. There were a lot of things going on the 80s. It's a shame he couldn't have seen that come together and benefited from it financially for himself and for his family because it would've made a huge difference in that respect.

**MARK JUNGE:** I've got a feeling though that wouldn't have made you a different person.

**JOE CANTRELL:** No, I don't think it would have it all in that regard but it would've allowed us to live a little bit more comfortably and provide better medical care and things like that. My dad was never a guy... he just would never go to the doctor. I think had I gotten him there he might still be around today. I don't know. He just wouldn't go his whole life. Well, he never had to. He was always physically healthy although he smoked those unfiltered Camels for years. He liked to smoke and drink a cup of coffee. That's what he enjoyed. He would sit out in the yard -- smoke a cigarette and drink coffee. We even had neighbors say they just felt safe. He just had that presence. Like those commercials where that old male

lion is just lying there kind of looking around and you know you're safe around him. That's kind of how he... you just felt safe.

**MARK JUNGE:** That's a good way to put it (laughs). What year did he die?

**JOE CANTRELL:** 2004.

<sup>6</sup>Diana Lynn Ossana is an American writer who has collaborated on writing screenplays, teleplays, and novels with author Larry McMurtry since they first worked together in 1992, on the semi-fictionalized biography *Pretty Boy Floyd*.

**MARK JUNGE:** Nine years ago.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Nine years ago this July.

**MARK JUNGE:** What did he die of?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Heart failure and kidney failure. They were both going on at the same time. He had had heart failure in March of that year and they life-flighted him to Salt Lake so there was not a whole lot they could do. They gave him some medication and that. Then he came home and he was doing really well. That was in June. I thought he was recovering really nicely then he just took a turn for the worse one night and they life-flighted him down there again one night and he never did come home. It was about a week. His heart was failing and his kidneys were failing. They couldn't go to work on his kidneys without affecting his heart and they couldn't work on his heart without affecting the kidneys so just was a tough...

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you go visit him?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh, I was there every day, yes.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did he talk much?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah. He was pretty lucid even until the last night. My older sister and I and my cousin -- his older sister's son -- happened to be in Salt Lake at the time so ~~he~~ ~~she~~ saw him his last night. It was hard.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you see him his last night?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah! I was with him all the time. I was with him through most things. I think that's maybe why we were so close. I was the one person that he probably told things to me that he couldn't tell other people. I was with him through a lot of the things. But yes, I was down there. They life-flighted him and I drove down there and stayed with him every day. That was one thing--I was appreciative of the job I have that I could take a lot of sick leave like that but I could be with him so I just took time off and just stayed down in Salt Lake with him until he came home.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did he know that he wasn't going to make it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. I think he sensed it. There was the time he was sitting on the couch and kind of leaning and said, "I don't know. I just don't feel **right good**." So he probably sensed something. I mean, I suppose you do.

**MARK JUNG:** He didn't let on... he didn't tell you anything?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not other than he just didn't feel right. He was a hard man. He just didn't complain. I don't know if it was just that era or what. He was tough physically and mentally. Even if he got hurt he didn't complain. He didn't complain about pain.

**MARK JUNG:** Had he ever been shot?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No.

**MARK JUNG:** No fights or accidents?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh, I'm sure he had a lot of fights but he could take care of himself.

**MARK JUNG:** Did you ever see him in a fight?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. There are people that have I'm sure. I have some names of people you could talk to that have that different perspective that way. I mean, you could just tell he was a tough guy. When we would spar when he was teaching us karate and that--in **kenpo** ~~Ken Po~~ you stand in what's called the "horse." You are simulating riding a horse so you could defend yourself off horseback. If you weren't doing it right he would come by and kick your knees out. You would be standing there and your legs were trembling so your legs were strong and from that stance you would block and he would stand in front of you and we would spar and he would hit so you felt it. And those kinds of things so we did a little bit of that and you could just tell that he was a very tough guy.

**MARK JUNG:** He never told you about the fight to get into?

**JOE CANTRELL:** No. Well, some. He actually got into a fight when he was in his 60s down in Saratoga. He beat up a guy who was supposed to be a tough Mexican kid out of Rawlins at the Wolf hotel down there. I guess he was having dinner with an architect or something down there but this kid was giving him a hard time and he told them basically, "knock it off." He put that kid in the hospital and he was in his 60s then. And then as a police officer he told me stories of some of the arrests he had made.

**MARK JUNG:** Can you give any examples?

**JOE CANTRELL:** One time he talked about here in Rock Springs years ago there was some big tough guy who was causing trouble. He and another guy arrested him and all the way to the station this guy was mouthing off and talking about how when he got out he was going to kick their ass. When he got out of the car... He opened the door for that guy and he had his gun and just pistol-whipped him across the

temple. He split his head open and the guy dropped and they hauled him into the jail. And he woke up... he just didn't take.... he didn't fool around. He just took care of business.

**MARK JUNG:** Yes.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Or like when you would go to a door to arrest somebody... he would knock on the door and as soon as the guy would come to the door... and you would have to see him do it but you would just grab them and throw them out on the ground and were on them right away so you didn't stand there and try to have a conversation. He just took care of business right away. It may mean the difference between your life or not when you're in that business so he was a tough guy who for lack of better terms just didn't tolerate any bullshit at all in his field. Particularly in the police side of it or in his life in general. That's just how he was. He was very direct and knew exactly who he was and what he stood for.

**MARK JUNG:** That's exactly what he did with Rosa, right? He just took care of business.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Right. He just took care of business. It was just a reaction.

**MARK JUNG:** Huh! Wow! That's fascinating! You know, I would love to read (your book) some time and I'm not pressuring you. You make the decision. I would love to read it. I want to ask you too now because this was on my outline... I didn't want to get away, Joe, without talking about this--when you came back here were you a part of this at all, this Rock Springs boom? I mean, did you see it? Did you feel it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah, I saw it and felt it. Like I said, I was in college though... when we moved back here... well, when he took over as public safety director I was up in Powell so I was away at college that year and then the shooting happened. Of course, I sat out and was around those couple of years until the trial and then after that I went back to college in Laramie. In the summer months I was here and on holidays. Yeah, I lived through that and felt it. It was just a different community at the time. It's hard to explain. It was like the wild, wild West. It was a boom town. There was no housing. There were a lot of single guys. Oil field type work. People were living wherever they could--camping trailers, tents. They were making good money and they were spending money. The bars were busy. You could probably go out any night and I suppose see a fight or get into ~~one what if~~ if you wanted to. It was just that atmosphere at the time. It's a much different community today. I don't think people could even relate to that period of time even though there's a big strong oil and gas industry going on now... There was a very limited police department and he talked about that there was just him and a handful of **young** guys he had hired too... and he would tell me, they would literally go during the night... literally go from one shooting or knifing to another almost all night long. It was just different.

**MARK JUNG:** Did he ever talk about... I mean supposedly there was some corruption. Wataha (Paul) was mayor; there were accusations and "60 Minutes" came in here, the Denver Post had the story... did your dad ever talk about that?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Some. That's why they hired him. After the "60 Minutes" thing. That actually brought about a lot of controversy to this area. I think they did kind of the slanderous job to Rock Springs--Rather and the group. Like a lot of people, I don't really have a lot of respect for Rather and that whole segment. It was slanted. I think part of the reason that they brought him in was because of his reputation. He had a reputation for being a straight shooter--the kind of guy that would come in and take care of business. That's what they needed and wanted at the time. And that's what they brought him in for - so-called "cleanup" Rock Springs. That's what he was starting to do that in order to do that he felt you needed to tackle the drug problem which prompted him to bring in Rosa as an undercover agent.

**MARK JUNGE:** Oh, he brought in Rosa?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, he hired him. To fight drugs. To fight the drug side of it. So he hired Michael Rosa to come in and work undercover drugs and they made several busts and he was effective and... somewhere along the way he turned on my dad my dad was really the only friend he really had. I don't think any of the other officers really liked him or got along with him very well and my dad supported him.

**MARK JUNGE:** Well now, there were more than just drugs... I mean the... he (Cantrell) was part of the administration and just by his connection to the mayor he would've been tied up with corruption even if he was as straight as an arrow, you know?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Well, I don't know... I'm trying to think back to if Wataha actually hired him because then there was another mayor. Keith West was the mayor when that shooting happened. I don't think Wataha... he might have brought him in. I can't even remember now but it would've been right at the end of Wataha's administration if he did.

**MARK JUNGE:** He must've run smack dab into... if it wasn't corruption, he must've run smack dab into people that were making a buck. Don't you think?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. Probably. He never really talked about that side of it to me.

**MARK JUNGE:** I don't suppose he would.

**JOE CANTRELL:** But I know the main reason that they hired him was to clean up the town and that's what he was doing. I would have to research that to see when Wataha left and West came on because West was mayor when he shot Rosa so he must've been a relatively new mayor.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did you spend much time downtown?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Not really.

**MARK JUNGE:** I wonder what K St. was like.

**JOE CANTRELL:** I mean, you would drive down through there... it was a busy street... All those little bars were open and there were people on K St. all the time. Was probably like a small version of Bourbon Street--I don't know. In the evening, people coming and going into all those little bars and if you drove down at (K St.) it seemed busy. I turned 21 I was in school in Powell so... I think back then you could drink when you were 19. You could go into bars when you were 19.

**MARK JUNG:** Yeah, it had something to do with the Vietnam War when they changed it.

**JOE CANTRELL:** But I didn't go into the bars down there on K St. myself.

**MARK JUNG:** Well, who was Earl Dotsey and the Townsend Club? Do you know anything about that?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He was a black guy here... it was an after-hours club. I mean, I know where it was located. It was just a place down on a side street. I guess, he opened after hours so when all the other bars were closed they all go down to Dotsey's from two till daylight, I guess. There was a lot of trouble down there.

**MARK JUNG:** I'll bet your dad was familiar with that place.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Oh yeah. Well, he was probably familiar with all of them. I think he was in all of these bars. One name I was going to give you was Neil Kourbelas... Neil would be a good one for you to talk to because in those days Neil was an officer with the police department. My dad hired him. He was actually the officer on scene at the shooting so he can tell you about that plus he can tell you about all the stuff that happened at the bars and how they handled those situations. He would have a much different perspective of my dad than I would as far as the working side.

**MARK JUNG:** Aren't you a little amazed that your dad could walk into these places and be sort of the cleanup artist--the law, the Clint Eastwood type and survive all this stuff?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. But that's where he was. If you knew him... that's what I mean... if you knew him and talk to him you would feel that. But he was an ultimate professional. He didn't take any...he was very aware of his surroundings and how to deal with that. But yeah, anything could happen. I think part of it was who he was. Part of it was when he would walk into those places they knew you were dealing with business. It wasn't some guy coming in and saying, "Hey let's get out of here and shut down." He was like, "Hey you do what I'm telling you or there are going to be consequences." And they knew that. I think they just sensed it with him. That's just my perception but there are people like that. Some guys you might screw with them, backtalk, and some you won't and he was one of those that they sent you shouldn't and if you did, there were consequences to it. All you need is one example and the others fall in line.

**MARK JUNG:** Do you think that he felt he was on his way to cleaning things up before the shooting happened?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah... he felt he was making progress. He wanted to do that-- in part of the coaching side of him... and Neil could probably tell you more about this but he was building those guys into... he



wanted them to be an elite police department. He wanted them all to be very proficient with handguns. He was teaching them some martial arts and he wanted them to be all physically fit. All of those components mattered in that work and maybe even the difference between saving your life or not on some occasion. So he was striving for that. Having them work out and shoot more and learn those skills that make them better police officers.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you think he was building "esprit de corps" so to speak? That's what he was hired to do.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes, I do. That's what he was hired to do. And I think those guys liked that. They respected that and wanted that. Anytime you're around somebody like a good coach--they want to bring the best out in you. When you start to ~~since expect~~ that those things are expected of you, you start to rise to that occasion and want to perform at that level I think. So I think they liked the fact that he was driving them and hard on them and pushing them to be better.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you think that that whole process of cleaning up the department and cleaning up the town got short-circuited because of the Rosa thing?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Probably. I mean, from his perspective it did. He was no longer in the picture and there are a lot of fine officers like Neil still in the program.

**MARK JUNGE:** Neil Compton?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Kourbelas.

**MARK JUNGE:** Oh, Neil Compton was the Atty. Gen.'s assistant or something like that.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Delbert Gray is still on the force. He was one of them. They can give you much different perspective than I can. I'm speaking as his son.

**MARK JUNGE:** I would love to talk to them. Were you ever worried about him in this job?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't ever remember feeling worried because I always just felt that he could take care of himself. Probably, at some point, but I ~~don't~~ remember feeling that way. He was just one of those guys that you felt you should be worried for the other guy--not him. I don't know, I never felt that way about them I guess. He never complained that he was worried.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did your mom worry?

**JOE CANTRELL:** She probably did. She never said anything.

**MARK JUNGE:** They probably had these late-night talks that you guys were not part of.

**JOE CANTRELL:** They probably did. There are probably things that she experienced when we were young and through his whole career that she would have a different perspective on than I do.

**MARK JUNGE:** When you look back at this period in the 70s and Rock Springs --are you close to that or do you just say, "Ahh that was 30 years ago or more." You don't think about it. How do you look at it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think about it. Anybody who was here at that period of time... it had an influence on them and probably still does today. When people think of Rock Springs people they think of that period of time because that's where it gained a lot of its modern-day notoriety so it probably has an influence... more than I even probably realize. I don't think about it. When I go to work I'm just thinking about my work. I'm sure at some level it may have an impact.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you think Rock Springs deserved its reputation?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, it was a tough place but I'm not sure deserves the reputation that it got. Through Dan Rather and that whole thing, it got elevated into something **maybe** bigger than it really was. It was definitely a tough place--a legitimate boomtown and all of those problems that go along with it.

**MARK JUNGE:** One of the things that people tell me so far since I've been here this weekend is that people don't understand how this town was. They were tightknit. They were immigrants. They worked for... they helped each other. They were neighborly. The whole atmosphere changed. People were not quite as open. They had lost this sense of neighborhood. Did you experience any of that?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Probably. I mean, there are still people here that I feel very close to but it's all that small group that you've known for years. It's a different town today because of the size of it and obviously there's a lot of new people here. The people that I associate with are still mostly the older Rock Springs group... people that I still feel a connection with. Although there are some new people that I've met and developed **good** ~~some new~~ relationships with.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you think this town is good for having gone through this? I ask people...you know, I talked to a guy who thought the boom towns are exciting and he likes boom towns. Do you feel that this town benefited by the boom?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. That's a hard question to answer, for me I guess. There are a lot of positive things that have come out of the boom to help the community. There's a nice hospital. You've got a nice college, a really nice recreation center. A lot of things that benefit people today came out of that boom so in that aspect I think it was positive for the community--the physical things. On the other side of it--I don't know--I think people have some deep-seated feelings and it's probably scarred some people in some ways. I think there's probably some resentment about it being portrayed the way that it was because like in any community there are a lot of very fine people but there's that bad element to it they got all of the notoriety.

**MARK JUNGE:** Is there still that element to it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** There probably is. I mean, I'm not really aware of it much anymore.

**MARK JUNGE:** But you work for the BLM so you must see some of it. You get out much?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I get out some but I am more office-bound now than I had been. You don't see it like I think you did in that timeframe. It's just a different community. There is a much different infrastructure in place to handle growth that you didn't have been which created a lot of those problems. The town has grown into itself now which at the time it was booming and it couldn't. It couldn't grow fast enough.

**MARK JUNGE:** Your dad was part of that--and you and your whole family was part of a Rock Springs history that was going through a hell of a transition, wasn't it?

**JOE CANTRELL:** It was. Now on this side of it, as far as the infrastructure, the physical things that have come out of that have all been positive things for the community I think.

**MARK JUNGE:** You are positive person!

**JOE CANTRELL:** (laughs) You think?

**MARK JUNGE:** Yeah! I would've loved to have met your dad because in some ways I think he would have looked on what good could have come out of something rather than what bad....

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, I think so. My dad was a ...he didn't mope around and he could have. He was always enthused to just go out and go hunting or go fishing or go camping or go out shooting. He wasn't a guy that just sat around and moped.

**MARK JUNGE:** Did he have close friends or was he a loner?

**JOE CANTRELL:** He had a few very close friends. He didn't have a big circle of friends. There's a guy here today- Loy Arnoldi -he who was a close friend. But, he didn't hang around a lot of people. Loy was probably one of his closest friends here. They would talk guns and hunt. They just have a lot of things in common that way.

**MARK JUNGE:** If you hunt with a guy, he's going to be a close friend, I suspect.

**JOE CANTRELL:** True. They were both law enforcement guys. I think he was close to Neil and those younger guys. They were younger but he would stay in touch with them or them with him.

**MARK JUNGE:** Are you this way too? When you make friends--you make just a few?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes, for the most part. I have a... maybe it's just inherited but I feel reserved. It's hard for me to open up to a lot of people about personal things. It's easy to become acquaintances and meet people and be friendly. I like to meet new people and do new things and all that but to feel close to somebody that I trust... I have a handful of close friends. And I think part of that is because through this whole process, it has made me leery of people and their motivations to some degree. It's hard for me to open up and trust somebody.

**MARK JUNGE:** Do you think that you have a sense of people that you can tell when they are trying to get something out of you or can you or...

**JOE CANTRELL:** I think so. I mean I feel that I have a good perception but we're not always right. My dad had that. I mean he felt... he told me one time he makes an immediate opinion of someone within the first probably two....ten seconds of meeting somebody and he was rarely wrong. He just had perception of being the line of work that he was I think you can kind of get a sense from whether he liked them are not or felt that they were trustworthy or not.

**MARK JUNG:** Well, it was a necessity.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. And he sensed that immediately and he made an immediate opinion.

**MARK JUNG:** Did he ever changes opinion though?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't know. I would say it would be rare.

**MARK JUNG:** (laughs) Well Joe, is there anything you want to say that I've skipped over inadvertently-- something that I should have covered?

**JOE CANTRELL:** I don't think so. I guess the thing was I was even very leery of talking to you and honestly really didn't even want to... a lot of this I just want to leave it be. I don't even want to participate.

**MARK JUNG:** I hear you.

**JOE CANTRELL:** It's just that there so much pain behind it... I really just don't want ~~much~~ to talk **much** about it anymore.

**MARK JUNG:** I respect that.

**JOE CANTRELL:** But I felt... I don't know, I don't think I'm wrong but I felt that you're a very trustworthy guy and you're doing this for the state of Wyoming for the historical value of it. I felt if I could contribute to that in some way that it was worthwhile doing. The thing that I would want people to **understand and** know, like I said before, is what a good man my dad was and what a great dad he was. The story behind him is his family and the things that they went through throughout this ordeal. We were just a normal family--human beings experiencing a lot of those things too so there was a lot of suffering that went on... or pain that went on with this whole ordeal. I guess from that side of it

**MARK JUNG:** Well, could I say this? That you were an ordinary American family that went through some extraordinary experiences?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yes. And all that that went along with it came, like I say, a bigger than life story that impacted a lot of people in different ways in this community --- friends of ours. I can't stress enough people that helped us -- our family through that time -- the gratitude that I feel for them and that our family does. I feel that I never had a great opportunity or the right opportunity to thank them in the right way but I think that they would understand that.

**MARK JUNG:** I think they would. I think they would. Does this thing still go on and on? Is it something you'd like to be able to shake?

**JOE CANTRELL:** Yeah, in some ways but I understand that it's a part of history and it's a big part of our lives. It shaped and affected us for the rest of our lives. So it was just a growing experience I guess. An experience through life like a lot of people go through--it shapes you through life in some way or another -- hopefully better.

**MARK JUNG:** Well, I will say this--I think you've done admirably well.

**JOE CANTRELL:** Thank you.